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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 002002

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR J. FRAZER
LONDON FOR C. GURNEY
PARIS FOR C. NEARY
NAIROBI FOR T. PFLAUMER

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TAGS: [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDP) SITUATION
WORSENING

REF: A. HARARE 1934

[B](#). HARARE 1901

[C](#). HARARE 1870

[D](#). HARARE 1099

[E](#). HARARE 0998

Classified By: Political Officer Audu Besmer for reasons 1.5 b/d

Summary

[1](#). (C) Comprised mostly of workers and their families from commercial farms, the number of IDPs in Zimbabwe could surpass half a million in the coming months. While the GOZ has sought to deny the problem in the past, even accusing temporary squatter settlements of being opposition training camps, the Ministry of Labor has recently agreed to appoint someone to liaise with UNDP on the issue. UN Geneva is in the process of hiring an OCHA-IDP Coordinator and that person is expected here in mid September. With the IDP situation likely to deteriorate in the coming months, we urge early consideration of funding to extend the OCHA-IDP Coordinator's contract beyond the current 5-months; see action request in paragraph 8. End Summary.

Scope of the Problem

[2](#). (U) Using the number of commercial farmers already evicted, the average number of workers per farm, and their average family size, George Olesh and Crispin Kukasha of UNDP estimate the number of displaced commercial farm workers and their families currently at 270 - 300,000. They predict that if the GOZ proceeds to evict farmers from all properties listed for compulsory acquisition, the number of displaced people could grow to 500 - 600,000, depending only on how fast evictions progress. Zimbabwe Community Development Trust (ZCDT), a local NGO, undertook a mail-in survey of commercial farmers in July - August 2002. Of 3,200 surveys sent, they received 346 responses. According to ZCDT Director Tim Neil, the results of the survey indicate that 151,240 farm workers are currently displaced and at risk. Since there are approximately 5.2 people in each farm worker's family, ZCDT estimates that about 786,448 people are currently displaced as a result of farm invasions. ZCDT's survey also asked how many days of food supply farmers and workers had as of August 8. The average response was 54 days. 99% of commercial farms are currently listed for resettlement. According to Neil, if resettlement proceeds and the pattern of disenfranchisement continues on its present trajectory, 1.3 million farm workers and their families will be displaced in the coming months.

[3](#). (U) Mike Murray of Justice for Agriculture (JAG), also conducted a survey for a German NGO, Organization Help, in which he visited some 600 farms in Mashonaland, Manicaland and Midlands in May and June 2002 to assess need for a feeding program, and get a sense of overall food shortages. His data indicate 150,000 farm workers were displaced at that time and in need of assistance. At 5.2 people per farm worker family, this gives a figure of 780,000 people displaced. Based on the numbers of people seeking assistance from political retribution since the March elections, Amani Trust, a local human rights NGO, estimates the number of opposition members and their families unable to return home at 69,000. In some cases, Amani Trust has provided bus fare for MDC members to simply leave the country, after concluding that they would be unable to return home in the near-term.

Difficult Living Conditions

[4](#). (U) Crispin Rukasha, National Program Officer at UNDP, visited 15-20 commercial farms, where the farmer was already evicted, from July 25 - August 8 to get a better sense of the scope of the IDP problem and their individual circumstances. He observed that settlers are occupying dwellings formerly occupied by farm workers, and in most cases the workers are now squatting on some other area of the farm. Some have moved into crowded dwellings in communal villages near the farm. In one case, a farmer who had not yet been evicted would pick up his workers in the village every morning, drive them to the farm for the day's work, then drive them back in

the evening. Some displaced workers have made it to the Harare area where they have squatted on unused land. In urban areas, most displaced workers have been forcibly evicted by the police and army and told to return to their original farms. Very few have the option of returning "home" to communal lands they originally came from. 75% are of Malawian, Mozambican or Zambian ancestry, and in many cases they have lived on the commercial farms for a generation or more; some were born there.

15. (U) There is considerable animosity between settlers and farm workers, and tensions are growing. In a May 2002 report, Amani Trust documents numerous instances of violence and intimidation of farm workers by settlers and Zanu-PF militants. In general, new settlers plan to do the farm work themselves, or hire others to help. However, Mike Murray reported observing on numerous occasions, settlers forcing farm workers to continue working under "food for work" terms, handing out short supplies of maize in exchange for work done. As Ref. B. suggests, conflicts between workers and settlers will increase as evictions proceed, and more competition for land sprouts with the rains.

GOZ Beginning to Acknowledge Problem

16. (C) Until recently, the GOZ has sought to deny or gloss over the IDP problem. On August 29 Police arrested Frances Lovemore of Amani Trust in Harare, as well as 17 workers preparing an IDP camp in the Mazowe area (about 50 km north of Harare). The Mazowe land was leased from a farmer by Amani Trust and ZCDT to accommodate IDPs. Police have charged Lovemore with possessing subversive material, but Amani Trust has been unable to determine the charges pending against the workers. Last year, Police raided an Amani Trust safe house, detaining 27 people for 2 days and accusing Amani Trust of running an opposition training camp. As a result of such intimidation, many IDPs don't want to be identified as such, fearing further victimization. The majority of IDPs, therefore are "displaced" on farms where they were previously living and working, afraid to seek assistance but with no protection, income, secure food source, or medical attention. However, in the past two weeks, the Ministry of Labor has agreed to assign a contact person to liaise with the UN on the issue. Delicately, UNDP has relied on the helpfulness of local District Administrators, Provincial Administrators, and CEOs of Rural District Councils to help identify farms where displacement is occurring, and gain access to interview workers.

OCHA to Assign IDP Coordinator

17. (U) Thanks to U.S. funding, OCHA plans to assign an IDP Coordinator to Harare. According to George Olesh, Deputy Coordinator for the Relief and Recovery Unit of the local UNDP office, the UN office in Geneva is in the process of considering applicants for the position. UNDP expects the incumbent to be in Harare by mid September. UN Geneva has advertised it as a 5-month position, with the possibility to extend (funds permitting). According to Olesh, the intention is for the incumbent to act as the point person for all IDP issues in Zimbabwe. The incumbent's first priority will be to work with local NGOs to gather better data on the extent of the problem. Olesh was vague about whether the Coordinator would be able to design programs, as the OCHA-IDP Unit's primary mandate is information gathering. (Note: In our view, the new OCHA person will inevitably have to focus--quickly--on program design and implementation, an effort which will require further assistance from donors. End note.)

COMMENT

18. (C) It is very difficult to provide precise estimates of the IDP population because many are afraid to report their plight, or they merge into extended family structures, and different methods are used to count them. However, Amani Trust, UNDP, ZCDT and JAG numbers are consistent with each other. We have no reason to doubt that Amani Trust's estimate of 69,000 displaced MDC supporters. The UNDP estimates focus on IDPs at highest risk, i.e. farms where the farmer has already been evicted. Thus there are at least 300,000 farm workers and their families displaced whose plight is most acute. ZCDT and JAG surveyed farmers still on their properties, but extrapolated numerically to reflect farms where the farmer is already gone. Thus the figure 780,000 includes the UN figure and cases where the workers, displaced economically and kicked out of their dwellings by settlers, are simply in the pipeline to higher vulnerability when the farmer is evicted. By any interpretation, having lost their residences and incomes, displaced farm workers and their families are vulnerable to medical risks and lack basic food and housing necessities. Not only could their numbers--and the consequent humanitarian challenges--quickly rise in the coming months, but animosity with settlers is making their bad situation worse. While the government has agreed to cooperate with the UN on the issue, the recent

arrest of workers at an IDP camp, and past harassment of IDPs indicate the GOZ is more interested in hiding an embarrassing problem than in meeting the needs of a displaced population for whose plight it bears exclusive responsibility. With no break foreseen in the coming months on farm evictions, food shortages, or the drought, the Department may wish to consider funding the OCHA-IDP representative beyond the 5-month period envisioned in UNDP's current contract.

19. (C) Comment continued. In an August 28 meeting between the Ambassador, AID and UNDP (including the ResRep), it was agreed by all that local NGOs have a decent grasp of numbers and the potential scope of the IDP issue. However, there has been little to no planning on how to design and implement programs that address their needs. Accordingly, our focus will be more on what we can do to alleviate their suffering than to simply track numbers and document their plight. The UNDP is aware of our concerns in this area. End Comment.
SULLIVAN